Statement of

**STEVE PROCTOR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
UTAH COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY NETWORK
(UCAN)**

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

EN BANC **HEARING ON PUBLIC SAFETY INTEROPERABLE
COMMUNICATIONS AND THE 700 MHz D BLOCK PROCEEDING**

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Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission, Distinguished Guests. My name is Steve
Proctor. I am the Executive Director of the Utah Communications Agency Network, a
quasi-State Agency formed by the Utah Legislature *"to establish an independent state
agency and a board and executive committee to administer the creation,
administration, and maintenance of the Utah Communications Agency Network to
provide public safety communications services and facilities on a regional or statewide
basis for the benefit and use of public agencies and state and federal agencies" (Utah
Code 63C-7-102)*. UCAN was established in 1997 and now enters the eleventh year of
operation providing public safety narrowband communications services to approximately
85% of the population of Utah. Prior to introduction and passage of the legislation, an
intergovernmental task force met for over two years formulating the basis and philosophy
by which this newly formed agency would operate and provide service. That basic
philosophy still stands today: our mission is public safety communications services and
interoperability. The systems first major test after completion was the 2002 Winter
Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Utah. During those 17 days over 10 million calls were
process successfully by this newly created network. The system not only supported
public safety, but the operations, games management and communications for the athletic

events. Each of these functions operated on a shared network with multiple users and multiple disciplines using a common platform.

Many times I have been asked what were the core principles that got us where we are. UCAN and members of our staff have been asked to present in 35 locations throughout the United States and the world including Beijing, Brisbane Toronto and Vancouver, British Columbia about the organization and operational successes of UCAN. In simplest of terms this is our recipe:

1. We as a group identified the common pain that brought us together: The need to communicate effectively autonomously (within an agency) and interoperate with each other (agency to agency).

2. A convener of political stature assembled the parties together. Input into that development process included governors, senators, congressman, state legislators, city and county officials and public safety agency leaders and the users.

3. A small amount of seed money was provided to begin the project with. These dollars coupled with grants and the authority to bond allowed the initial investment in our infrastructure. Agencies continue to pay a maintenance fee to support, maintain and establish a replacement fund to keep the system operational.

4. A committed leader brokered the deal. It had their full-time focus.

5. The agencies involved met in openness and provided input into the process and addressed the needs from their perspective. Participation on their part was and is always voluntary.

6. The group formed a common vision with clearly defined goals to reach that vision. Monthly reports were made to the board and executive committee.

7. We have a formal charter, governing structure, by-laws, expected outcomes, and rates structure. The users of the system approve rates.

8. We formed a successful partnership with many of the vendors who supplied equipment, supplies, towers, and communications sites. Partnerships led to economies during the construction of the network.

9. The system has predictable management. The expected outcomes are established by the USERS who serve on the governance board of the agency and meet regularly to monitor its progress, operations and finances. The Chairman of this Board is one of the users elected by them to lead the group. The have an intimate knowledge of the workings of the system.

10. We have recognized that networks such as this require constant care and feeding. That includes maintenance, software upgrades and coverage improvements. The network has specific interoperability talk groups, channels and common radio profiles. We encourage operational exercises to maintain training on the use of the system.

It is these core values, which have lead us from a difficult beginning, to an ongoing successful operation with a future and expected operational life span well into the future. The primary statistics, which measure our success, are these: our original expectation for network size was to be five counties (of 29) and approximately 4-5000 users. As of this month we serve 125 different agencies of state, local and federal government with nearly 20,000 users in 15 counties. There are an additional 2500 users and 12 additional sites on the drawing board for completion in the next 18 months. We have 59 remote sites and just fewer than 500 repeaters and the supporting connectivity to bridge the network together. Our system employs common interoperability events channels in every radio to facilitate joint agency operations. The list of users we serve include: police, fire, EMS, transportation, corrections, ambulance, hospitals and natural resources agencies. The users continue to set the course of UCAN. As stated by our board chair, the Sheriff of Weber County, Utah: "we pay for the privilege of governing ourselves". By the way, in order to accomplish what we have done, and continue to manage the network we have a fulltime staff of less than 10, we use a host of contractors, consultants, engineers and other support staff to assist us in managing and maintaining and upgrading this network.

The future of UCAN as borne thru our past experience is this. There are no canned solutions for any technological problem or opportunity. The key is to be flexible with respect to all the options. Technology is such a necessary and expensive proposition for

any public safety agency. Their job is public safety and not technology. With technology shifts occurring about every 18 months, major shifts requiring huge investments in capital projects are simply prohibitive. Most agencies will buy from an enterprise operation if the service is good, reliable, flexible and meets their needs. The other key is that they want a say in the management process. When the users feel that their voice is heard, the partnerships are maintained and services continue to focus on the needs of the agencies rather than the governing structure. We have learned that the key to maintaining our focus is to plan for about a year to eighteen months ahead rather than the traditional 3-5 years. We are also willing to gamble a little with the options such as using the used equipment market, purchasing equipment from other agencies who are moving to other platforms. We are honest and open with our users about service applications, costs, opportunities and the rates for those services. We tell them up front the costs and its impact to their agency. While our initial foot print was defined by the Olympics, we have continued to expand and improve that coverage, where financially practical. That has brought new users to the system and better interoperability. The key is to keep focused and keep moving forward.

Of the state and local government cooperatives that I am familiar with, the Utah Communications Agency Network has become a model of efficiency focused on the provision of one thing: the best public safety communications service and interoperable system meeting the needs of the agencies who have come together to build it.

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We appreciate the Commission's ongoing support of public safety communications and the opportunity to present at this hearing. We welcome any questions you might have.